

A STUDY OF THE FIRE & EMS CULTURES

Executive Development

The Amalgamation of Two Cultures: A Study of the Fire & EMS Cultures within the FDNY

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Certification Statement

I hereby certify that this paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that the appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions, or writings of another.

Signed: _____

Abstract

The problem is that the FDNY is planning to increase the number of integrated facilities of Fire and EMS personnel, but is unaware of why success is perceived in only one out of the two existing stations. The purpose of the research is to assess the various aspects of the similarities and differences of the Fire and EMS groups' cultures in the identified facilities. The evaluative research method will be utilized in this Applied Research Project. This research approach includes the application of surveys, questionnaires, personal observations, interviews and literature review to address the questions regarding the effects of organizational culture on two groups working and residing in the same location. Results indicated that the selection of personnel, leadership styles and incentives to perform have proven to be key elements in the quality of the workplace within the FDNY. I recommend that integrated facilities be expanded throughout the Department in a manageable size as part of a variety of strategically planned locations to serve the communities of New York City.

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Introduction

During the past three years, the efforts of the FDNY to combine Fire and EMS personnel into a shared facility, has had mixed results. The problem is that the FDNY is planning to increase the number of integrated facilities of Fire and EMS personnel, but is unaware of why Station 47 was unsuccessful and Station 23 was successful.

The purpose of the research is to assess the various aspects of the similarities and differences of the Fire and EMS groups' cultures in Station 47 and Station 23.

The evaluative research method will be utilized in this Applied Research Project. The research approach will include the application of the Campbell Organizational Survey, questionnaires, interviews and literature research to address the following questions:

1. What is organizational culture?
2. What are the measurable components of organizational culture?
3. What processes have been used by departments of similar size to assess their organizational culture?
4. What are the similarities and differences in culture between Fire/EMS at Station 47 and Station 23 in FDNY?

Background & Significance

The origins of the ambulance service and fire department in New York City began at approximately the same time. "New Year's day 1898 heralded the consolidation of the different areas of the city and the beginning of a new era for the Fire Department. All fire forces in the various sections were brought under the unified command of the first Commissioner of the Fire Department" (http://home2.nyc.gov/html/fdny/html/history/ems_article.shtml).

“In the early years (1870) of pre-hospital emergency care in New York City, ambulances were dispatched via telegraph from Bellevue Hospital's Centre Street branch. Ambulances were staffed with a highly trained medical doctor or surgeon from the hospital. In the first year alone, they responded to more than 1800 calls for help throughout the city”.

(http://home2.nyc.gov/html/fdny/html/history/ems_article.shtml).

On March 17, 1996 the New York City Emergency Medical Services, an agency within the Health & Hospitals Corporation was consolidated into the New York City Fire Department (FDNY). A welcome booklet was produced and circulated to each Emergency Medical Service (EMS) employee. The information in this booklet referred to the EMS workforce as civilian employees of the Fire Department. Descriptive items in the Welcome Booklet included a table of organization of the FDNY with EMS listed as a bureau within Fire Operations. A separate FDNY Civilian Code of Conduct book was distributed to each EMS employee. The physical transformations of the EMS bureau within the FDNY began with a change in the corporate logo, uniforms, and terminology used in daily communications.

Presently, the FDNY staffing includes approximately 11,163 firefighting personnel, 2,729 EMS technicians and paramedics and 1,200 administrative employees. In the past fiscal year (July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005) some services provided to New Yorkers and visitors by the FDNY included 465,955 Fires, Non- Medical Emergencies and Medical Calls and 1,129,842 Medical Emergencies (2005 Annual Report). The New York City Fire Department facilities and staffing include; 206 firehouses, with 198 engines and 143 ladders, 31 EMS Stations with 358 ambulances inclusive of 141 voluntary units.

In the later part of 2002 and early 2003 six fire companies were closed in New York City due to financial constraints. The Rossville Station in Staten Island (Station 23) was opened on February 14, 2003 and occupied by the EMS members only. On June 6, 2005, Engine 168 was added to the FDNY and placed in the Rossville Station. The Rockaway Station (Station 47) was opened on November 3, 2004. This facility housed EMS Station 47, Engine 265, Ladder Company 121 and Battalion 47. There were two separate facilities that existed in Rockaway (Queens, New York) for each EMS and Fire Stations. Both buildings were in need of costly repairs and renovations. The new integrated facility was designed to house the two old stations in a new building. The Fire companies moved in one week before the EMS members. On November 3, 2004, New York City Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg commented at the opening ceremony of the first combined firehouse and EMS station that,

The combined firehouse and EMS station will greatly improve the working environment of our emergency workers and better serve the surrounding community. This new state of the art facility is part of our ongoing efforts to improve all FDNY facilities so our firefighters and Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) have the best working conditions". Fire Commissioner Nicholas Scopetta commented after Mayor Bloomberg and stated, This facility represents a continuing commitment from the City to provide New Yorkers with the finest fire protection and pre-hospital care in the country.

Currently, fire companies Engine 265 Ladder Co 121 Battalion 47 and EMS Station 47 all reside in an intergrated facility in Rockaway Queens. The tenant population is composed of 54 firefighters 8 first line officers, 6 lieutenants 2 Captains and 4 Battalion Chiefs. The EMS tenants include 34 EMTs, 23 paramedics, 6 lieutenants, 1 Captain. The working staff at the facility varies throughout a 24 hour day. There are six EMS units in both the day and evening

hours and four units on the overnight shift. Engine 265 and Ladder 121 and Battalion 47 are consistently staffed with the same number of personnel. Approximately 14 firefighting and 14 EMS members are present at a given time.

EMS Station 23 and Fire Engine Company 168 cohabitate at the Rossville station in the borough of Staten Island. Approximately 6 firefighting and 12 EMS personnel are working in the facility at a given time. The nickname for Engine 168 is the “Shanghi Express” referring to an *abducted* person, which was derived from the inception of the company in this house. The officers have informally stated that they were recruited to work in this new company because they would be best suited to work in a combined station. The caveat to this assignment was the selection of a desired geographical work location for all members upon the completion of the promotional process. Kerr and Slocum Jr. believe that “the reward system represents a particularly powerful means of influencing an organization’s culture”(J. Kerr and J.W.. Slocum, 2005).

EMS Station 23 is comprised of personnel and ambulance units that originated in Station 22, Willowbrook in Staten Island. EMS Station 22 units were deployed to geographical locations within the 23rd Battalion. This led to increased travel times to and from the unit’s primary area of response. The new Rossville Station provided a facility within the 23rd Battalion which decreased travel time and decompressed an over crowded Willowbrook Station.

The problem statement is that the FDNY is planning to increase the number of integrated facilities of Fire and EMS personnel throughout the New York City. Previous efforts to solve the stated problem included the change of some leadership positions at one facility. The further integration of Fire and EMS personnel is a new concept in the FDNY. This problem may reduce the ability of the FDNY to achieve its mission in a harmonious and effective manner. The

issues of managing organizational change, integration, cultural diversity, and leadership are being addressed by FDNY. Municipalities in the large metropolitan cities surveyed in this paper are faced with similar issues.

There is insufficient research data to evaluate the organizational cultures of each group in a co-habitable setting. This problem is related to the United States Fire Administration (USFA) mission with regard to the increasing number of fire departments in the United States that are reporting less structural fires and increased pre – hospital emergency medical care assignments. The consolidation of Fire and EMS workplaces appears to be a growing trend by a number of large metropolitan cities such as Boston, Philadelphia, San Francisco, San Antonio, and Los Angeles County. This issue is relevant to the Executive Fire Officer Program (EFOP) Executive Development course with regard to sections of; change management, change and creativity, as well as organizational culture and change.

My research will define organizational culture, its measurable components, investigate initiatives utilized by comparable sized agencies and identify similarities and differences between the two FDNY integrated facilities. The evaluative research method will be used in this Applied Research Project to distinguish technical from adaptive challenges that may face the FDNY with considerations for future integration. The data collected from four groups; firefighters, fire officers, EMS technicians, EMS Officers within two integrated facilities that are part of one department will be compared to each other respectively. Leadership styles will be identified and evaluated for efficacy in accordance with the Department mission in the Results section of this paper.

Literature Review

“Any attempt to measure organizational culture can only be an imperfect assessment. Such measurements capture only a snapshot of the culture at a single point in time. In reality, many organizational cultures are in the process of changing and need to be monitored regularly and by a variety of methods to gain a true picture” (Newstrom & Davis, 1993). One analogy provided by Newstrom & Davis (1993) is that culture is an idea that is somewhat intangible, like the air in the room; it surrounds and affects everything that happens in that organization. Because it is a dynamic systems concept, culture is also affected by almost everything that occurs within an organization.

Edgar Schien, in his comprehensive book on organizational culture and leadership, suggests that organizational culture has three levels. The levels range from visible artifacts and creations to testable values and even preconscious basic assumptions. Artifacts are symbols of culture in the physical and social work environment. They are the most visible and accessible level of culture. “Artifacts are the most frequently studied manifestations of organizational culture, perhaps because of their accessibility. Among the artifacts of culture are personal enactment, ceremonies and rites, stories, rituals and symbols”(Schien, 1992).

Personal enactment is behavior that reflects the organization’s values. Leaders of a company lend insight into these values. “Ceremonies and rites are cultural communication acts that can be broadly stated as organizational socialization” (Newstrom & Davis, 1993). These occasions provide opportunities to reward and recognize employees while continuously transmitting key elements of an organization’s culture. “Stories give meaning and identity to organizations as they are told and retold, especially in orienting new employees. Part of the strength of organizational stories is that the listeners are left to draw their own conclusions – a

powerful communication tool”(Nelson & Quick, 2000). Symbols communicate organizational culture by unspoken messages. They may only be mental images, but can be used to build solidarity in the organizational culture. Moorehead and Griffin (2001) present a case study of the changing of the Electronic Data System (EDS). Dick Brown was appointed as the Chief Executive Officer of EDS to turn the company’s stagnant growth around. Brown discovered that “the company was in effect, wallowing in its own success, had no clear direction from the top, had lost performance culture, and had become bloated with employees”. To further symbolize to employees and clients alike that this was not the old EDS anymore, the corporate logo was changed from a square to a circle, possibly to resemble the dot that will be driving the company’s future in e-business systems. Brown’s organizational re-structuring of EDS has proven to be successful in many ways.

One famous company known for its family, fun culture is the Walt Disney Company. “Disney transmits its culture to employees through a careful selection, socialization, and training (Nelson & Quick, 2000)”. The employees are referred to as “cast members” who work on stage or backstage and wear costumes rather than uniforms. The training Disney provides is through it “universities”. Upon graduation new cast members are paired up with role models to continue their learning on site.

Southwest Airlines has used symbols to emphasize its customer service value by displaying the heart symbol (the “Love” airline) and painting aircrafts with fun characters. Low fares were referred to as Fun Fares underscoring the fun image. Southwest’s corporate culture is highly visible, and translates into unsurpassed customer service.

Newstrom and Davis describe two types of change involving cultures that elicit a response from employees in an organization. “One involves a move to a new location and its

culture, and the other involves the integration of two or more cultures in the workplace” (Newstrom & Davis, 1993). These authors define organizational culture in accordance with Edgar Schein’s definition, but while stressing that knowledge of one’s organizational culture “attracts attention, convey a vision, and typically honor high – producing and creative individuals. By recognizing and rewarding these persons, organizational cultures and identifying them as role models to emulate”(Newstrom & Davis, 1993).

Another measurable component of organizational culture is the forces of change in the workplace. According to Nelson and Quick (2003), change has become the norm in most organizations and is inevitable, but change is a process that can be managed. Forces of change can come from internal and external sources. Kurt Lewin developed a model of change process that has stood the test of time and continues to influence the way organizations manage planned change. “This model contends that a person’s behavior is the product of two opposite forces; one force pushes towards preserving the status quo, and the other force pushes for change”(Nelson & Quick, 2000).

Hatch describes a dynamic version of the organizational culture theory. Her perspective asks: “How culture is constituted by assumptions, values, artifacts, symbols and the processes them?” Cultural dynamics reaches beyond “Edgar Schien’s interest, toward a more complex, process- based understanding of organizational culture” (Hatch, 1993).

Philip Weiss in his article discusses and compares a fire culture as teamwork and dependency and an EMS culture as complimentary and independent. A typical fire service acknowledges and supports a team effort required to do a dangerous job. He describes the basic work unit as a “company” that is lead by an officer who assumes “a parental role in the company / family”(Weiss, 1998). It is the officer’s job to keep the company together, in line and not

expose them to undue peril. All members of the company are expected to do their part to keep the team together. “Everything is done as a company. Anything that builds unity and esprit d’corps is encouraged” (Weiss, 1998).

The organizational dynamics for the EMS culture are described by Weiss as a “unit” that functions in an independent manner under a set of regional protocols. He describes the EMS unit as “trained to think and act independently. Teamwork is not important!” (Weiss, 1998). Weiss states that members of the EMS unit are partners who spend two to three days a week working together. He uses the metaphor of the partnership as a marriage between husband and wife and “partners are equal in the eyes of the service” (Weiss, 1998). The author believes that this equality lends itself to less formal and more complimentary relationships.

This article was written by an EMS member of FDNY shortly after the 1996 merger. It incorporates some research components that define organizational culture. Mr. Weiss clearly reveals his biases, frustrations and hopes for the future. His analogous description of a partnership within an EMS unit is that of a marriage certainly requires teamwork and loyalty.

Procedures

In order investigate the key issues and address the research questions and methodology used in this Applied Research Project, organizational culture and its components were defined through literature review. The concept of organizational culture has its roots in cultural anthropology. The scope of this paper is limited to defining culture through sociology, social psychology and organizational behavior.

The literature review for this project began during this author’s Executive Development course with a visit to the Learning Resource Center (LRC) at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland. The online card catalog at the LRC was used to search for relevant

publications regarding Fire and EMS mergers and organizational culture. A number of visits to local state universities such as The College of Staten Island, Baruch University, Pace University and local libraries were necessary to gather data for the first two research questions. These institutions of higher learning provided me with valuable references regarding organizational culture outside the Fire service. The research materials were located in areas of Business, Psychology, Sociology and Education within the libraries' online reference databases. The EFOP Study Guide provides a great suggestion, "make friends with your librarian".

Some organizational scientists would argue for assessing organizational culture with quantitative methods, others would say that organizational culture must be assessed with qualitative methods. "Quantitative methods, such as questionnaires are valuable because of their precision, comparability, and objectivity. Qualitative methods, such as interviews and observations are valuable because of their detail, descriptiveness, and uniqueness (Nelson & Quick, 2000). Some considerations for assessing the organizational culture included the Organizational Culture Inventory (OCI) and the Kilmann – Saxton Culture Gap Survey. The OCI use Maslow's motivational need hierarchy as its basis; it measures twelve cultural styles with 120 questions and is a self report instrument. According to Cooke and Rousseau, the OCI provides an individual assessment of culture and may be aggregated to the work group and to the organizational level (Rousseau, 1988). The Kilmann – Saxton Culture Gap Survey focuses on what actually happens and on the expectation of others in the organization. It is also a self report instrument that analyzes short term versus long term norms within a culture. The Campbell Organizational Survey (COS) was the instrument selected for this Applied Research Project because of familiarity, recommendations from the instructional staff at the NFA and its reputation and acceptance in the academic arena.

Surveys, questionnaires, interviews, and direct observations were procedures used in this Applied Research Project. The Pearson Solution Performance Solutions in the online brochure states “the Campbell Development Surveys are recognized globally as the premier survey instrument for collecting, assessing, and quantifying attitudes, opinions and perceptions at the individual, team, and organizational level”. The COS assesses an organization's climate, offering insights on areas that need improvement and those that should be celebrated. It can be used with all employees or members of a targeted work group and allows the organization to survey employees on their satisfaction in such areas as feedback, top leadership and organizational planning.

The planning of the COS section was discussed in a formal setting at FDNY headquarters with key members of the Department on April 6, 2006. The estimated cost to administer the survey by the proposed vendor for each resident of the two facilities was carefully reviewed. A second proposal was submitted with a smaller sample group to reduce the projected cost. The smaller group would include the thirty officers at both facilities. Both proposals were rejected, citing that participation was on a voluntary basis and compliance could not be ordered.

This researcher has visited both Station 23 and 47 frequently from April through August 2006. A review of my activity log indicates twenty-five visits to Station 47 and thirty to Station 23 respectively. The visits were during the morning, evening and night shifts on weekdays and weekends. There are two work shifts for the firefighters and three for the EMS workforce. The kitchen at each facility was a common gathering place in which a great deal of informal discussion occurred. This forum provided the researcher a chance to observe the subjects in a relaxed and casual environment.

Thirty officers, sixteen fire and fourteen EMS were hand delivered a Leadership survey at scheduled supervisor meetings. The Station 23 meeting was held on June 9, 2006 and the Station 47 meeting was held on June 22, 2006. The Leadership survey was an item included at the beginning of the meeting agenda. The purpose of the Leadership survey was explained by this researcher to each officer present at the meeting and in a letter (Appendix A). Separate colored processing forms were distributed to each group (pink for Fire and green for EMS). The right hand corner was cut on the station 47 forms and the station 23 forms were left intact. The participants were requested to complete and forward the survey by using the stamped addressed envelope provided. The results and feedback will be discussed in the following section of the paper.

“A questionnaire is a collection of written questions about the respondents’ attitudes, opinions, perceptions, demographic characteristics, or some combination of these factors” (Moorehead & Griffin, 2001). The questions are designed to identify the demographic data, organizational socialization, job function, pre- merger or post -merger hire, level of formal education and causality. Questionnaires were distributed to the firefighters and EMS technicians at each integrated facility on April 20, 2006 (Appendix B). Self addressed envelopes were provided for each participant with a due date of June 1, 2006.

Personal observations were used to collect data for this Applied Research Paper as well. Station barbecues at both facilities took place in May of this year. In commemoration of National EMS week, each Station held an open house inviting all members of the Department to attend. These dates were posted in the Event Calendar and circulated with the bi-weekly newsletter and paychecks. Station 47 held their open house on Friday May 12, Station 23 was the following day. I attended both venues, in hopes of observing the residents in a relaxed and cordial setting. On

Friday, I arrived at Station 47 at 3:00 P.M. and departed four hours later. The next day at Station 23, I arrived at noon and departed at 4:00 P.M. The Rockaway station (47) audience was mostly comprised of members going off duty and others starting their shift. There was some mixing of Fire and EMS personnel, but it was mostly an EMS function. In Contrast, at Station 23 the audience was an equal mixture of Fire and EMS employees and their families. There were games, blow up slides, clowns, music and fair like environment from the apparatus floor extending out into the street. The surrounding community neighbors were in attendance and in support of this event.

On Friday April 8, 2006 I met with Battalion Chief McGrath from the 47th Battalion in the Rockaway Station. The purpose of this meeting was to establish a working relationship and discuss this Applied Research Project and its components; the surveys, questionnaires, interviews which would take place in the upcoming months. The meeting took place on the apparatus floor, a defined common area within this integrated facility. Chief McGrath was cordial, brief, and patronizing with issues regarding EMS within the FDNY.

On April 24, 2006 I attended a plaque dedication in memory of a recently deceased EMS officer at Station 23. Prior to the formal ceremony, I had discussed the preparation of a memorial wall that was built by a few talented individuals but sponsored by all the residents of Station 23. The ceremony took place in Station 23 on the apparatus floor. The plaque was dedicated by the Fire Commissioner to the family of the officer and to all the members of Station 23. The seating at this event included the immediate family seated in the front row to the left, and the dignitaries were in the right front row. I observed the remainder of the rows were filled with Fire and EMS members seated together to pay tribute to the loss of man who was well respected and loved. As the congregation began to exit, the widow and the son of the deceased were observed standing by

the memorial wall and heard saying, “My husband loved all of you, in his twenty three years of service, he said this work assignment was absolutely the best yet. He enjoyed coming to his second home here at Station 23, even on his days off. He would always talk about the upcoming social activities with all of you more than the excitement from the job itself”. The members of the Station each had a story to share about their time with their beloved leader and friend.

On Thursday June 1, 2006 I met with Captain Olsen (EMS) and Captain Grant (Fire) at Station 23. They shared the plans to build an octagon shaped oak table for the kitchen. The top of the table would include etched and painted drawings and symbols of both Fire and EMS ambulances and fire trucks. The name of every member assigned to Station 23 from opening day to the present will be displayed on the table. On that same visit, I observed an EMS technician and a firefighter working together to paint a series of stripes with the FDNY design through the first floor hallway. The conversation that was heard between the two guys included the words “we really have it good here at the station”. The two men were working meticulously and collaboratively after the tour of duty and with a sense of pride in their workplace.

On Saturday June 3, 2006 in the overnight hours I visited Station 47. I met with the on duty EMS officer and was offered a walk – through of the facility. I noticed some renovations to the supervisor’s office, which include a wall dividing the room. He explained to me that the wall was built to reduce the noise in the late hours when some members of the Station would be resting as well as provide additional privacy for the EMS and Fire officers. The Station 47 facility appeared crowded, cluttered with vehicles and broken equipment. This researcher did not visualize any postings for upcoming events, social announcements on the kitchen, office or apparatus floor walls. Four EMS technicians, who just completed their shift, in a candid and

informal discussion described working in this integrated station as “always being treated as stepchildren”.

The research for the third question for this Applied Research Project was conducted primarily through telephone interviews and E-mail to leaders of similar sized agencies in the United States. The networking and establishment of the contacts used began at the EFO Program in March 2006. My classmates, faculty and other program participants were a great resource that led to additional information regarding large metropolitan cities Fire and EMS agencies. The fifty most populated cities in the United States were identified through the United Census Bureau via the internet site (Infoplease.com). The results are included in the Metropolitan Cities Survey (Appendix F). The questions asked of these city and state agency leaders are referenced in Appendix E.

The fourth research question comparing the similarities and differences between the two integrated facilities within the FDNY was conducted through a survey (appendix B), personal observations, interviews, and a review of historical data.

Results

Results for question #1 What is organizational culture?

Organizational culture has been defined by a variety of scholars from distinct disciplines. Some definitions include; Deal and Kennedy’s “the way we do things around here”, Van Maanen and Barley state “Collective understandings”, J.C. Spender’s view “A belief system shared by an organization’s members”. There is little agreement about how to define organizational culture. A comparison of several important definitions suggests that most have three things in common: “they define culture in terms of values that the individuals in organizations use to describe appropriate behavior; they assume that these values are taken for granted; and they emphasize

the stories and other symbolic means through which the values are typically communicated”(Moorehead & Griffin, 2001). The most applicable definition to the first research question in this project is derived from Edgar H. Schien “The pattern of basic assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered, or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration”.

Results for question #2 What is organizational culture?

The measurable components of organizational culture are distinct and unique to each group or organization. Each has its own history, patterns of communication, systems and procedures, mission statements and visions. According to Newstrom and Davis “Most organizational cultures have historically been rather implicit than explicit (Newstrom & Davis, 1993)”. More recently organizations such as Southwest Airlines, Ben & Jerry’s, General Electric, DuPont, IBM, Disney, and Exxon – Mobile have begun talking about their intended cultures, and many top leaders see one of their major roles as speaking about the kind of environment they would like to create in their companies.

Over time, an organization’s culture becomes perpetuated by its tendency to attract and retain people who fit its values and beliefs. “Employees will gravitate towards the organizational culture they prefer as a work environment” (Newstrom & Davis, 1993). The literature suggests that this will result in a “good fit” of employer and employee. Organizational socialization as discussed in the literature review section of this paper is the process through which employees learn about their firm’s culture and pass their knowledge and understanding on to others. They learn through observation, communication, and interaction with others what is acceptable in the organization and what is not. Moorehead and Griffin (2001) describe one attribute of organizational culture as “When the culture becomes part of them (employees) when the can

ignore what is written in the book because they already have embraced the values it describes—the culture can have an important impact on their actions”.

As important as culture can be to an organization, it can provide drawbacks as well. Karl Weick in his 1993 article cites and analyzes the 1949 Mann Gulch Disaster in which 13 smokejumpers were killed fighting a wildland fire, discussed sensemaking as one reason for the death of the firefighters. In this particular incident, the fire did not behave as expected. As the conditions worsened, more and more things took place that did not make sense. “Because of the culture of these firefighters, they expected their leader to take them out of danger. When even his actions and orders failed to make sense, they no longer could make rational decisions on their own”(Weick, 1993).

Results for question #3 What processes have been used by departments of similar size to assess their organizational culture?

The processes that have been used by departments of similar size to assess their organizational culture are limited to the respondents of the survey (Appendix D), historical research, interviews and personal observations. The FDNY is the largest Fire Department in the United States serving the most populated city (NYC) with over eight million residents. To date, 40 out of 50 fire departments have responded to the Metropolitan City Survey. The results can be summarized to state that only 6 departments had separate Fire and EMS branches, 18 departments utilized cross trained personnel, 30 departments depend on volunteer services, 14 departments use contracted vendors for pre-hospital transport.

The six departments identified in the survey with separate Fire and EMS branches were contacted via E-mail, telephone and written correspondence. Comparatively to the FDNY, none stated Fire and EMS resided in an integrated facility. Through the discussion process, it was

stated by a four chiefs that EMS is relatively new to the Fire service and yet seems to be a very busy part of the department. The majority of the large cities survey with career personnel stated that their Department was staffed with cross –trained firefighters and Emergency Medical Technicians.

The dialogue and common theme that municipal pre-hospital care agencies like Boston EMS and San Francisco EMSA, that are part of the Public Health Care system and not a fire service focus on public education and disease prevention. The culture of these agencies in the listed large cities was difficult to identify through the methods used in this research process. The FDNY is truly unique in the number of Fire and EMS incidents responded to each year, with the largest Fire suppression and Emergency Medical Service in the country. In the past ten years, the staffing with the FDNY has increased to meet the call volume and demands for the preservation of life and protection of property. In discussion with many new recruits within the FDNY EMS Command, a significant number have sated a desire to pursue the career path to firefighter within the Department. The reasons given were a shorter retirement, better pay and an attractive work schedule.

5. Results for question #4 What are the similarities and differences in culture between Fire/EMS at Station 47 and Station 23 in FDNY?

The similarities and differences in culture between Fire/EMS at Station 47 and Station 23 in FDNY are quite noticeable. The obvious similarities are the external ones; facilities, uniforms, vehicles, equipment and remote locations. The differences in each station range from fairly noticeable to quite subtle. During the visits to each facility, personal observations, discussions, participation in scheduled events led this researcher to the following assumptions: The Station 47 first tenants were the re-located fire companies. The Station 23 first residents were the EMS units

that were selected from Station 22. The EMS members of Station 47 moved in one week after the firefighters and officers. The Firefighters and officers at Station 23 (Engine 168) moved in two years and four months after the EMS members. There are a greater number of firefighting personnel than EMS at Station 47. There are a greater number of EMS personnel than firefighters at Station 23. Station 47 has four chief officers assigned to the facility and Station 23 has none.

As previously stated, personal observations of firefighters and EMS technicians working side by side on a number of occasions was noted. The same was not observed at Station 47 in any of the visits. The appearance of the Station 23 interior and exterior venues was well maintained. It was observed that to the right of the front door a bulletin board with two types of tee shirts for sale were on display; one shirt for EMS Station 23 and the other shirt for Engine 168. The Rossville Station 23 consistently appears clean, well maintained and brightly light. The officers at Station 23 share a common office with three workstations in a large room. I have observed both fire and EMS officers helping one another with daily activities.

The entrance to the Rockaway Station 47 is to the left side of the building adjacent to a small parking lot. There are no noticeable postings of upcoming events, social gatherings or announcements on the Station 47 walls. The apparatus floor appeared over-crowded with vehicles and equipment. There was a smell of diesel fuel in the office at Station 47 on a number of visits. The walls appear in the original cinder block color with scuff marks throughout the halls. The fire engines, trucks and ambulances appear to be older in age at Station 47 than Station 23. This researcher observed limited interaction between fire and EMS personnel in the Rockaway station.

The average length of time on the job for the firefighters at Station 23 is 4.6 years; the Station 47 average is 8.5 years. This statement is based on a questionnaire (Appendix C) that was completed by firefighters and EMS technicians exclusive of officers. Station 47 EMS staffing is

similar to Station 23, however the firefighting personnel is more than double that of Station 23 (Engine 168). The Station 47 population has been together one year longer than that of Station 23. The Station 23 staff was selected as a new Engine Company 168 and EMS Station 23. The Station 47 staff was a relocation of an existing in two buildings that were in need of costly repair into an integrated facility.

Discussion

The interpretation of the data presented to answer the four research questions in the problem statement will be discussed in this section. The definition for organizational culture that was most relevant to this Applied Research Project was that of Edgar H. Schein. He suggests that organizational culture has three levels, which range from visible artifacts and creations to testable values to invisible and even preconscious basic assumptions. He stated that “The pattern of basic assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered, or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration”(Schein, 1992). The literature review has revealed that many articles regarding organizational culture cite Mr. Schein’s comprehensive work and acknowledge him as a renowned expert in this field.

The components of organizational culture according to Moorehead and Griffin include the establishment of values; a vision of what the organization will be like in the future; initiating and implementing strategies which build on the values to accomplish the vision; finally, to reinforce the behaviors of the employees as they act out the cultural values and implement the organization’s strategies. An organization must first have basic beliefs and values for its employees act on and adopt. A vision is important to set goals and provide direction for where the organization will be in the future. The implementation of strategies includes the recruiting and training of new employees who share the values and will carry them out. Finally, the

reinforcement of culturally accepted behavior. The organization must reward the desired behavior in ways the employee values. This was evident in the case of the Station 23 and Engine 168 officers that were selected with the understanding that if the integration was deemed successful the reward would be the selection of a work location upon promotion for each member. Psychological and economic contracts in organizations exist in an unwritten format according to Newstrom and Davis. “Employees agree to give a certain amount of loyalty, creativity, and extra effort, but in return they expect more than economic rewards from the system” (Newstrom & Davis, 1993).

The processes that have been used by departments of similar size to assess their organizational culture were difficult to assess. According to Edgar Schein (1992), Anthropologist believe in order to fully understand a culture, one must be immersed in it. In retrospect, this question would have been suited for the comparison of data that was already collected in a scientific manner, rather than a questionnaire from a novice researcher. The FDNY organization was difficult to compare to others because of its size and workload. The research has discovered that the FDNY is unique in many ways, from the tactics and strategies used in fire suppression to the innovative delivery of pre-hospital care. New Yorkers refer to the firefighters as “New York’s bravest” and EMS as “New York’s best”.

The similarities and differences in culture between Fire/EMS at Station 47 and Station 23 in FDNY are clear and delineate a successful integration of personnel in one facility from the other. The leadership style at each station plays a large role in employee satisfaction, performance and adaptation to a new environment. The leadership at Station 23 has proven to be more adaptive than technical. The officers have stressed a concern for a team approach that is

inclusive of every employee in the facility. They have focused on the strengths and talents of individuals to meet the goals of the group. They mourn, eat, build, paint and socialize together.

There was a lack of camaraderie observed at station 47 at each visit. Pride and respect for one another was not apparent. The surveys indicated dissatisfaction in working at the Rockaway station from both groups. The facility appeared over – crowded and poorly maintained as previously stated. The stories told at Station 47 are those of incidents and complaints. Station 23 is happy to boast about its triumphs and great ceremonies and celebrations. Station 47 may be over - staffed for an integrated facility. The younger population at station 23 may be more tolerant to change than their counterparts in Station 47. Finally, the reason for moving into an integrated facility based on need rather than desire may be the largest contributing factor in determining the long term success or failure of this model house.

Recommendations

My recommendations include the recognition of the organizational cultures and their components within the FDNY. Fire and EMS are two distinct cultures that can compliment one another and reside in harmony when an adaptive environment is maintained. The FDNY has been and can remain to be a trend setter across the nation through the amalgamation of these two cultures within one department, under one roof. The next step in this organization is to recognize those members who will conform to change and approach their assignments in an adaptive and constructive fashion. The changes that are recommended are perhaps to relocate the Battalion Chief location to another station. Assignments to this type of station should be with an incentive to perform. The benefits I expect to result from the recommended changes would be an increase in employee satisfaction resulting in increased productivity. Perhaps it will be a place that a member enjoys going to work in.

Additional research should include a comparative study of similar sized departments with an integrated workforce. A more in depth survey to identify employer and employee satisfaction in the workplace is needed. A closer look at mergers and their short and long term organizational cultural effects in the business, academic and government settings would prove beneficial to the Department leadership from the lessons learned by others.

A follow – up evaluation should be conducted periodically, at the members Annual Medical or Training Day. A scientific survey can be completed annually by each member, and the data can be presented to identify the trends and beliefs of large groups or subgroups. This data can provide the leaders of the organization with direction to reinforce the values that support organizational culture.

In conclusion, my recommendation to other researchers who wish to replicate this study is to restructure or delete the third question. It was difficult to collect the data, and some uncertainty regarding the honesty of the responses exists. First and foremost, ensure you have support from the top management, and then be persistent yet patient with questionnaire and survey results. The literature review proved to be very informative and led to a clearer understanding of organizational culture. As stated earlier, any attempt to measure organizational culture can only be an imperfect assessment. Such measurements capture only a snapshot of the culture at a single point in time.

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Appendix A

Cover Letter for the Leadership Survey

April 20, 2006

Dear Officer,

My name is Abdo Nahmod. I am employed by the New York City Fire Department, and currently enrolled in the National Fire Academy Executive Fire Officer Program. The research topic included with the attached survey is about identifying organizational culture within the FDNY. The information collected will be used for research purposes only and will be secured by this researcher in a confidential file.

This is an anonymous survey. Please complete the Behavioral Style Inventory[®] sheet and return it to me by close of business day August 1, 2006. A self – stamped and addressed envelope has been provided to you for your convenience.

Thank you for your anticipated participation and valuable input with this survey. Please feel free to contact me at (212) 964-4518 or at Nahmoda@FDNY.NYC.GOV if you have any questions regarding the research questionnaire process.

Sincerely,

Abdo Nahmod

Enclosure: 1

Appendix B Leadership Survey

Behavioral Style Inventory ©

Instructions: Circle the word on each line (work from left to right) that best describes you. Add the number of circled words for each column and record your scores under the tally section.

Descriptive Word Groups

W	X	Y	Z
All Business	Bold	Personable	Deliberate
Organized	Telling	Courteous	Listening
Industrious	Independent	Companionable	Cooperative
No-nonsense	Decided	Talkative	Reflective
Serious	Resolute	Warm	Careful
To-the-point	Risk-taker	Amiable	Moderate
Practical	Aggressive	Empathetic	Non-assertive
Self-control	Authoritative	Shows emotions	Thorough
Goal oriented	Assertive	Gregarious	Patient
Methodical	Unhesitating	Sincere	Prudent
Business-like	Definite	Sociable	Precise
Diligent	Firm	Demonstrative	Particular
Systematic	Strong-minded	Sense-of-humor	Thinking

Tally Section

Number of W's _____ Number of X's _____ Number of Y's _____ Number of Z's _____

*This material was derived from an exercise in the Executive Development Course (EFOP March 2006).

Please use the self stamped and addressed envelope to return your completed form.

Thank you

Appendix C
Cover Letter for Member Questionnaire

April 20, 2006

Dear member,

My name is Abdo Nahmod. I am employed by the New York City Fire Department, and currently enrolled in the National Fire Academy Executive Fire Officer Program. The research topic included with the attached survey is about identifying organizational culture within the FDNY. The information collected will be used for research purposes only and will be secured by this researcher in a confidential file.

This is an anonymous survey. Please complete the colored Scantron® answer sheet and return it to me by close of business day August 1, 2006. A self – stamped and addressed envelope has been provided to you for your convenience.

Thank you for your anticipated participation and valuable input with this survey. Please feel free to contact me at (212) 964-4518 or at Nahmoda@FDNY.NYC.GOV if you have any questions regarding the research questionnaire process.

Sincerely,

Abdo Nahmod

Enclosure: 1

Appendix D

Member Questionnaire

1. When was your date of hire at FDNY?
2. How long have you been at your present assignment?
3. Do you work in the Fire or EMS branch of the Department?
4. Do you work in Station 23 or Station 47?
5. Are you assigned to a BLS, ALS, Engine or Ladder?
6. Do you volunteer in your community?
7. Do your plans include retirement within 0-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20 years from today?
8. Do you think the integration of both Fire & EMS personnel in one facility provides a pleasant workplace environment?
9. Do you feel cross – training of firefighters and pre-hospital care technicians will enhance the service and the Core competency the Department provides?
10. Do you enjoy your job?

Appendix E

Metropolitan City Survey

- 1 Do you have a department where Fire and EMS are separate?
- 2 Does the workforce reside in integrated facilities?
- 3 Are the members cross-trained as firefighters and EMS technicians?
- 4 Does your agency use a private company to provide pre-hospital care?
- 5 What is the demographic composition of your department?
 - A. Career (100% full time paid employees)
 - B. Part Time
 - C. Volunteer
 - D. Combined (paid & volunteer)

Appendix F:

List of Metropolitan Cities Surveyed

City Name	7/1/2005 population estimate	Size rank 2005	City Name	7/1/2005 population estimate	Size rank 2005
, N.Y.	8,143,197	1	Louisville-Jefferson County, Ky. ¹	556,429	26
, Calif.	3,844,829	2	Washington, DC	550,521	27
, Ill.	2,842,518	3	Nashville-Davidson, Tenn. ²	549,110	28
, Tex.	2,016,582	4	Las Vegas, Nev.	545,147	29
, Pa.	1,463,281	5	Portland, Ore.	533,427	30
, Ariz.	1,461,575	6	Oklahoma City, Okla.	531,324	31
, Tex.	1,256,509	7	Tucson, Ariz.	515,526	32
, Calif.	1,255,540	8	Albuquerque, N.M.	494,236	33
, Tex.	1,213,825	9	Long Beach, Calif.	474,014	34
, Calif.	912,332	10	Atlanta, Ga.	470,688	35
, Mich.	886,671	11	Fresno, Calif.	461,116	36
, Ind.	784,118	12	Sacramento, Calif.	456,441	37
, Fla.	782,623	13	New Orleans, La.	454,863	38
, Calif.	739,426	14	Cleveland, Ohio	452,208	39
, Ohio	730,657	15	Kansas City, Mo.	444,965	40
, Tex.	690,252	16	Mesa, Ariz.	442,780	41
, Tenn.	672,277	17	Virginia Beach, Va.	438,415	42
, Md.	635,815	18	Omaha, Nebr.	414,521	43
, Tex.	624,067	19	Oakland, Calif.	395,274	44
, N.C.	610,949	20	Miami, Fla.	386,417	45
, Tex.	598,590	21	Tulsa, Okla.	382,457	46
, Wis.	578,887	22	Honolulu CDP, ³ Hawaii	377,379	47
, Wash.	573,911	23	Minneapolis, Minn.	372,811	48
, Mass.	559,034	24	Colorado Springs, Colo.	369,815	49
, Colo.	557,917	25	Arlington, Tex.	362,805	50